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STATE FOR NEA/ARN, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, INR/NESA, R/MR, I/GNEA, B/BXN,  
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON LEBANON

Editorial Commentary

-- "A new Arab initiative"

Chief Editor Ayman Safadi writes on the back-page of centrist, independent Arabic daily Al-Ghad (08/23): "The moment the war on Lebanon ended, Israel began a process of comprehensive evaluation of its political and military performance. The war has constituted a significant point in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and because every experience has lessons to offer, Israel endeavored to learn the lessons from the war in order to use them in future strategies that would serve Israel's interests. The Arabs too must learn the lessons from the war, because the aggression showed major infractions in Arab policies and in methodologies adopted by the Arab countries in the face of challenges.... There is information that Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan are currently working on creating an Arab initiative for that purpose. Available information indicates that this initiative will be based on the Arab initiative that was adopted at the Beirut summit in 2002 and will seek to take back the peace process to the principles it was launched from, namely Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.... There are no guarantees that this move will yield quick successes, particularly since Israel is now suffering from an internal crisis that will limit the government's ability to respond with the Arab proposal, and since America is at the threshold of Congressional elections that will consume the U.S. administration's full attention. Yet, this initiative reflects an Arab awareness and realization of two important things. The first is that the situation in the region has deteriorated severely and reached a very grave and serious level ... and the second is that a mass Arab action is the only way for the Arabs to regain their role in their own world."

-- "Ambiguous phraseology"

Centrist, elite English daily Jordan Times editorial (08/23) opines: "The UN Security Council now has an established practice of mincing words and repeatedly using ones that have dual meaning. True, the Security Council is often obliged to resort to such tactics in order to garner support for its resolutions. Yet, never before has it used such ambiguous phraseology that deliberately confuses the parties to the conflict, as well as the rest of the international community, as it did in Resolution 1701. By calling for "the immediate cessation by Hizbollah of all attacks and the immediate cessation by Israel of all offensive military operations," the council has opened a Pandora's box that left Israel and its avid supporters free to interpret Israeli military actions as they see fit. The wording of the resolution in effect encouraged, or rather tempted, the Jewish

state to infiltrate deep into Lebanese territory last Saturday, under the false pretext that its action was purely "defensive.... The issue that concerns us most now is why the council continues to use words that can only invite or facilitate the violation of its resolutions.... When will the Security Council stop being double-tongued when it adopts resolutions? The fallout from the poorly drafted Resolution 242 still haunts all sides and is the reason why the Palestinian question remains unresolved until the present day. Had Resolution 242 been more clearly articulated and the parties would not be where they still are. As for the latest Israeli violation of the ceasefire resolution, the council is invited to step forward and call a spade a spade by describing the latest Israeli incursion into Lebanon as a grave violation in no uncertain terms. Otherwise, the council members would be accomplices to Israeli misinterpretation of Resolution 1701."

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